

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,580,374 to Okumura et al ("Okumura"). The Examiner has also rejected claims 10, 11, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okumura. In addition, the Examiner has objected to claims 3, 7, and 12-14 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner has admitted that claims 3, 7, and 12-14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 3, Claim 3 has been canceled, Claim 7 has been amended to depend from Claim 1, Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 12, and Claim 12 has been canceled. As a result, Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 13-15 are currently pending. The following remarks are considered by Applicants to overcome each of the Examiner's outstanding rejections. An early Notice of Allowance is therefore requested.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1, 2, AND 5 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(B) BASED ON OKUMURA

On page 2 of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okumura. This rejection is respectfully traversed and believed overcome in view of the following discussion.

The Examiner has indicated that Claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended Claim 1 to include all of the limitations of Claim 3. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that independent Claim 1 is now in allowable form, as are corresponding claims 2 and 5 because they are dependant from Claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of

claims 1, 2, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,580,374 to Okumura et al.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 10, 11, AND 15 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(A) BASED ON OKUMURA

On page 3 of the current Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 10, 11, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okumura. This rejection is respectfully traversed and believed overcome in view of the following discussion.

A. CLAIM 10

Claim 10 is dependant from Claim 1. Since Claim 1 is now in allowable form, so must be Claim 10. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,580,374 to Okumura et al.

B. CLAIM 11

The Examiner has indicated that Claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended Claim 11 to include all of the limitations of Claim 12. Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that independent Claim 11 is now in allowable form, as is corresponding Claim 15 because it is dependant from Claim 11. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of claims 11 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,580,374 to Okumura et al.

**III. OBJECTION TO CLAIMS 7, 13, AND 14 AS BEING DEPENDENT UPON A
REJECTED BASE CLAIM**

On page 3 of the current Office Action, the Examiner objects to claims 3, 7, and 12-14 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. This rejection is respectfully traversed and believed overcome in view of the following discussion.

A. CLAIM 7

Claim 7 is dependent upon Claim 1. As Claim 1 is allowable, so must be Claim 7. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner remove the objection to Claim 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

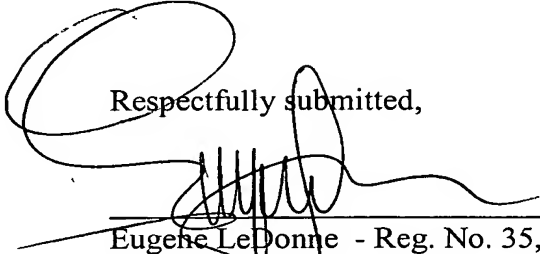
B. CLAIMS 13 AND 14

Claims 13 and 14 are dependent from Claim 11. Since Claim 11 is now in allowable form, so must be claims 13 and 14. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner remove the rejection of claims 13 and 14 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

Based upon the above remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact him at the number indicated below.

EL:JWT

Respectfully submitted,



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